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of Human
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Articles in Today's Clips

Monday, June 9, 2008

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Cunningham competent to stand trial in girlfriend's murder

By Jil Schult, HT Staff Writer
Monday, June 9, 2008 11:29 AM EDT

OSCODA COUNTY — District Court Judge Allen Yenior found Richard A. Cunningham competent to stand trial in the February death of his longtime, live-in girlfriend, 46-year-old Teresa Lynn Ulanski.

According to Oscoda County Prosecutor Barry Shantz, Yenior scheduled Cunningham, 50, of Lewiston, for a July 30 preliminary exam at Monday's competency hearing in 81st District Court.

Cunningham, charged with homicide-open murder in Ulanski's death, was ordered Feb. 28 to undergo a forensic examination by District Court Judge Kathryn Root.

A homicide-open murder conviction carries a life term.

Following a 9-1-1 call just before 3 a.m. Feb. 24, officers arrived at the couple's home in Greenwood Township to find Ulanski dead, the apparent victim of a homicide, according to an Oscoda County Sheriff's Department news release.

The preliminary exam is set for 1:30 p.m. in Oscoda County's 81st District Court in Mio.

Ulanski was the mother of three children: Joe, Mike and Erica (Rice), all of Wyoming.

Cunningham is being lodged in Montmorency County Jail.

Contact Jil Schult at 748-4518 or jil@gaylordheraldtimes.com.

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Save after-school programs at KPS

Sunday, June 08, 2008

The Michigan Department of Education has failed to come through for Kalamazoo Communities in Schools' after-school program.

Will this community come through instead?

Communities in Schools administers the 21st Century Community Learning Centers at Lincoln, Northglade and Milwood elementary schools and Milwood Magnet School. It had applied to the state education department for a continuation of a \$600,000-a-year grant for the after-school program that serves 450 children in the Kalamazoo Public Schools district.

Through this program, students who might otherwise be hanging out on street corners or sitting in front of televisions instead stay at school for an additional two hours to receive tutoring and participate in programs under adult supervision.

It's clear, from the 74 grant applications the state education department received from around Michigan for the federal funding from the No Child Left Behind program, that there is a tremendous need for after-school programs in high-poverty areas.

Only 24 of those applications received grants.

KCIS officials had not only asked the state to continue the program, but to expand it to two more middle schools and one high school. All these funding requests were rejected.

Knowing this community as we do, we believe all is not lost.

Two weeks ago, KCIS launched the public portion of its \$2.7 million campaign to fund its operations for the next three years.

Could this community raise an additional \$600,000 for the coming school year to keep the after-school program going next fall? We believe it can, especially if KCIS can demonstrate to the public that there are measurable benefits to the program.

Results of a two-year study, released earlier this year by researchers at the University of California, Irvine, the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Policy Studies Associates Inc., showed that regular participation in a high-quality after-school program is linked to significant gains in standardized test scores and work habits, as well as reductions in behavior problems among disadvantaged students. These gains also help to offset the negative impact of a lack of supervision after school.

There have been many worthwhile programs funded by grants, that, once the grants dry up, have been picked up locally.

One notable case is the county drug courts, originally started with federal grants through the U.S. Justice Department. As grant dollars dwindled, it became apparent four years ago that this worthwhile program, which helps people kick their addictions and diverts them from jail or prison, would be on the chopping block. So the private Drug Treatment Court Foundation was established to raise funds to keep these courts going.

If people here believe after-school programs in Kalamazoo Public Schools are a priority, they'll put their money where their hearts are.



June 7, 2008

Sobering reports rock Wall Street

Dow Jones tumbles on oil price surge, jobless rate increase

Associated Press

WASHINGTON - Pink slips piled up and jobs disappeared into thin air in May as the nation's unemployment rate zoomed to 5.5 percent in the biggest one-month jump in decades. Wall Street swooned, and the White House said President Bush was considering new proposals to revive the economy.

Help-wanted signs are vanishing along with jobs, so the unemployment rate is likely to keep climbing, a government report indicated, underscoring the toll the housing and credit crises are taking on jobseekers, employers and the economy as a whole.

Adding to the pain, oil prices soared to a new record high, while the value of the dollar fell.

The Dow Jones industrials tumbled almost 400 points.

The White House snapped into crisis-management mode. The president is considering further plans to help energize the economy, which already had been teetering on the edge of recession, said counselor Ed Gillespie.

Bush acknowledged, "This is a time of turbulence in the housing market and slow growth for our overall economy."

Pounded by soaring energy prices and plagued by uncertainty, nervous employers clamped down further on hiring in May.

Friday's Labor Department report was filled with sobering numbers:

- Employers eliminated 49,000 jobs in May.
- Job losses for the year reached 324,000.

The unemployment rate shot up from 5 percent in April, reflecting more workers losing their jobs as well as an influx of young people looking for work. It was the biggest over-the-month swing in the rate since February 1986. The increase left the jobless rate at its highest since October 2004.

The rate for teenagers rose to 18.7 percent, the highest in five years.

Detroit teenager dreams of escaping poverty

Charlie LeDuff / The Detroit News

DETROIT -- Keiara Bell may be, at this moment, the best-known example in Detroit of what teachers and ministers refer to as the "good child."

The 13-year-old came to light as the schoolgirl who schooled City Councilwoman Monica Conyers on civics and civility after she called Kenneth Cockrel Jr., the balding City Council president, "Shrek."

"You're an adult," Keiara told Conyers with unexpected poise and aplomb. "You have to know your boundaries."

Conyers stewed. "Well, I'm not going to be combative with you, young lady."

The Detroit News video of the incident made its way around the world through YouTube. Keiara has become something of a diplomat for the beleaguered city; her grace and maturity seemed to show that not is all wrong. The Wall Street Journal referred to her as a folk hero when it featured her on its front page, a place normally reserved for Nobel laureates and captains of industry. She's made an appearance on CBS' "The Early Show," and now Jon Stewart is calling.

But spend a few days in her west side neighborhood, and you realize all is not well in the world of Keiara Bell. It is a hard place to live, she says, one of the hardest quarters in one of the hardest American cities. Some nights she reads Proverbs in bed by penlight. Some nights she cries.

"I'm ashamed to be poor," she says while sitting in the secondhand taxi her father, Harry, recently purchased as the family's second car.

Through the windshield, she watches as her father and mother, Marsha, sell candy from the trunk of a rattletrap Cadillac. Candy brings the family nickels and quarters and goes toward luxuries like milk and gasoline.

This is the neighborhood where her father grew up, just off Lipton, a few blocks from her own: rotting houses, boarded windows, children with dirty clothing, rampant crime. There is no candy store, much less a grocery store, for miles in any direction.

More than once on this day, Harry gives children candy for free. "How can you turn a child away?" Harry asks. "God, after all, says love one another."

His daughter watches this good man sick with a bad heart. "I'm not ashamed of my family, though, because we persevere and whatever we have we share," Keiara says, sitting in the front seat. "But so many people here are resigned to being here. It's like they like it. I'm tired of seeing my cousins being shot over misunderstandings. People being poor. Living like this. It's so hard being an African-American girl here. It's so messed up. I just want out."

A hard neighborhood

She lives off Livernois, south of Davison. It's a place, according to statistics, where a child younger than 18 years old is twice as likely to die than the average American child. Unemployment is more than three times the national average. A third of the children here live in poverty. Three-quarters of the families have a single parent.

Keiara does not bring books home because there are not enough books at school to go around. They stay in the classroom and are shared by all students at Courtis Elementary/Middle School. Their day begins with a patdown and a metal detector.

"The books are old, the substitute teachers don't come; it's a system in shambles," says her mathematics teacher, Thomas Smith. "You do what you can do, teach what you can teach and at least see to it that they get a warm breakfast."

The eighth-graders in Keiara's class will cross the threshold of childhood into adulthood as they go off to high school in the fall. When asked, they tell you they hold the same aspirations and anxieties as children anywhere. They want to be filmmakers and pediatricians and engineers. Keiara wants to be a criminal defense lawyer.

They worry about getting tossed in a garbage can by the high school seniors, getting lost in the halls, spilling punch on the homecoming dress. Keiara worries about losing her path and falling into the darkness of the streets. It is like trying to construct a good life from warped materials.

In a simmering pot like this city, people want to take their children and leave. One friend of Keiara's is moving to Mississippi with her grandparents, another is going to Wisconsin. "It makes me sad it has to be that way," she says.

The Bells moved from their old neighborhood near Keiara's school because they had been burgled one time too many. The last time, the burglar stole her birth certificate. Now, their old neighbor, Carolyn Shauntee, who was something of a grandmother to the family, locks herself in, alone at night. The house the Bells once lived in stands across the street from her neat Cape Cod, abandoned and sagging.

"Keiara shows you can raise a kid in the neighborhood and still have her be successful," Shauntee says.

Looking for a way out

Keiara lies in bed most evenings, trying to work out her escape in her mind. She's been accepted to Tech, the city's premier public high school. Then Stanford, the dream goes. Then Harvard for law school. Then a good job in an office tower. Her father tells her to be not so serious. Be a child for a while, he says.

But it is serious, Keiara answers. There is no time to be a child.

"The pressure is built up," Harry says.

He is unemployed, hobbled by a congestive heart failure and diabetes. His wife has asthma and no insurance. They make it on a Social Security check and the candy. "There's nothing. No money. No job. No prospect of a job. It boils up and you want to explode. But we don't because we have God. He's our friend. Our hope. And he don't charge."

How to raise a good kid, much less four of them, is a matter of commitment, he says. The phone machine at the Bell residence gives the first clue. In the background, Keiara sings gospel music while her mother gives a prayer and an affirmation. "Praise the Lord."

There is no television in the family room. Her day is spent in school, then locked in the house, looking out onto the park where the children who gave up school a long time ago wander aimlessly.

Boys? There are no boys. The only gift a boy can bring at this age, her mother says, is a baby and poverty. The family spends 15 hours a week in church. Marsha and their two daughters sing in choir; Harry and their son, Anthony, play in the band.

"Keiara is by my side, always," Marsha says. "We don't want her getting mixed up in the drama out there."

After church on a recent Sunday, Harry sits out front on the bumper of his Cadillac, selling candy with the help of Keiara.

"She's my baby and I want to hold on to her as long as I can," he says. "But I watched that video with Mrs. Conyers and I realized she's not my baby anymore. I'm proud of my young woman."

You can reach Charlie LeDuff at (313) 222-2071 or charlie@detnews.com.

Food Gatherers fire up the grills to raise money to help feed the hungry

Posted by [spepple](#) June 09, 2008 07:54AM

Although the carrot is the trademark of [Food Gatherers](#), multiple grills were sizzling with brats, hot dogs, chicken, and corn at the Washtenaw Farm Council Grounds on Sunday afternoon during Grillin' 08, the not-for-profit's major fundraiser of the year.

"We grill today so that tomorrow we may gather," said Eileen Spring, president and CEO of Food Gatherers.



LEISA THOMPSON, ANN ARBOR NEWSAnn Arbor resident Noah Worden, right, and Trevor Towery of Ann Arbor, in background, get a sweet taste of Grillin' 08 during the annual Food Gatherers' fundraiser at Washtenaw Farm Council Grounds in Saline on Sunday.

Food Gatherers helps 150 community agencies, Spring said, adding that the not-for-profit agency provides enough food for more than 8,500 meals a day.

"Foreclosures, rising fuel and food costs are among the many reasons why more and more people in Washtenaw County are seeking emergency food assistance for the very first time," Spring wrote in her welcome letter to those attending the event.

In its 18th year, Grillin' got its start with about 40 people on the patio outside Zingerman's Delicatessen, Spring said.

Last year, 1,600 tickets were sold and she hoped that 1,200 tickets would be sold by the end of Sunday's event, put on with the help of about 200 volunteers.

Candice Stanley was one of those volunteers who not only attended the event for the first time but also grilled corn for the large crowd.

Within the first two hours she said she'd cooked four bushels and "there's still more to come."

Victoria Fields, 11, of Romulus tired the corn and declared the grilled on the cob variety "good."

For the Tobey Family of Ypsilanti, Sunday was the first time they were able to attend the Food Gatherers' annual fundraiser.

"Even with the economy, we have a certain amount of money to give each year," said Kathi Tobey of Ypsilanti, who attended Grillin' with her husband, Steve, and sons Michael, 18, and Ben, 20.

"This year, the family decided to give closer to home," said Ben Tobey, as he enjoyed eating a smoked chicken apple sausage.

"It's helping on so many levels in the community and we get a great meal out of it," Kathy Tobey said of event, for which tickets were \$50 and all but \$5 was tax deductible.

Joseph Dulin, the principal at Roberto Clemente Student Development Center in Ann Arbor, brought two of his grandchildren with him to the event.

"We've been coming for years," he said. "It's a tremendous thing they do, everything that's going on is very positive, the kids can run around and the food's good, too."

Special writer Lisa Allmendinger can be reached at lallmendinger@sbcglobal.net or at 734-433-1052.

The first stop for Eric Parker of Ann Arbor - who noted he was marking his 10-and-a-half-year birthday on Sunday - wasn't the food; it was the [Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum](#) arts area where he made "slime." After squeezing three squirts of sodium tetraborate and one squirt of polyvinyl alcohol into a small container, he mixed it together with his fingers and said the goop felt like Jell-O.

"I'm celebrating my half birthday today, and I got to make slime and get a free beach ball, this is a pretty good day," Eric said.

For more information about Food Gatherers, go to www.foodgatherers.org.

Categories: [Breaking News](#)

Comments

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June 9, 2008

Giving back — with style

Stephanie Antonian Rutherford

The Enquirer

As a survivor of spousal abuse, Rena Kay Rinearson knows what it's like to feel unattractive and unworthy.

And as owner of Adam & Eve Salon and Spa in Pennfield, Rinearson said she's found her purpose in helping victims of abuse feel beautiful again — by providing free beauty services to residents of the Inasmuch House Women and Children's Shelter, the same place she turned to when she was homeless and abused.

With her easy smile and infectious laugh, it's hard to imagine Rinearson, 43, was once homeless and a victim of severe physical and mental abuse. Eventually, Rinearson lost her home and custody of her young son, James, now 13.

With just \$20 to her name, she sought shelter at the Inasmuch House, a division of the Battle Creek Haven of Rest, where she received psychological services, legal assistance, job placement and a housing transition.

"After years of abuse, I was completely broken down and felt like I was worthless. I was at the bottom," she said. "They allowed me to feel safe and helped bring me up and get my son back. They helped me get my self worth back. Now it's my chance to help others who are in the same shoes I was in."

Three years later, Rinearson — a longtime hairstylist who was also licensed to do facials, manicures, pedicures and massage — opened Adam & Eve, at 1504 Capital Ave NE, where she now provides residents at the Inasmuch House with haircuts and other salon services free of charge.

"When you're struggling to survive every day, keeping up your appearance is the last thing you think about," she said. "Coming here helps residents get back some of their self-esteem, to help them like what they see in the mirror again."

Elaine Hunsicker, executive director of the Haven of Rest, said she is "incredibly impressed" by Rinearson's choice to help residents, and something as simple as a haircut can help residents feel more confident in re-entering the workforce.

"What she's done for them is so meaningful and it truly changes the way they feel about themselves," Hunsicker said. "Also, just having residents know that someone who has been through what they have is now succeeding, and cares enough to help, is a big confidence boost." Rinearson said she's not done helping — in fact, she's just getting started. Rinearson is in the process of securing financing for a second salon location and is working with grant writers and meeting with local nonprofits to help expand her free haircut and beauty program to help men, women and children in need throughout the county.

"I never thought I would get this far and I know I can go farther. I have my eyes on the skies," she said. "I want to show others that even though it may seem like they are at the bottom, help is there. All the hurdles they will have to jump through to get to the end of the rainbow will be worth it."

Stephanie Antonian Rutherford can be reached at 966-0665 or srutherford@battlecr.gannett.com.



June 8, 2008

Lansing Teen Challenge gets new opportunity in township

Partnership provides two houses in exchange for help with projects

Susan Vela

Lansing State Journal

John and Tammy Garvie are living under the same roof again, thanks to Lansing Teen Challenge and its partnership with Lansing Township.

The city-based Christian group that helps alcoholics and drug addicts, among others, is moving into two residential properties the township's Downtown Development Authority owns in a northern portion of the township.

The Garvies, who are Teen Challenge graduates, moved into one residence - 1306 Lake Lansing Road, which actually is in the city of Lansing.

Jarrold Barron, Teen Challenge's development director, said other graduates and staff members soon may become the Garvies' neighbors at 1320 Lake Lansing Road in the township.

No rent money is being exchanged between any of the parties. Instead, Teen Challenge has committed to contributing 80 hours of labor a month to area homes and neighborhoods.

Recovering addicts will assist Northtown Neighborhood Association and Paint A Place, which are listed with Lansing Teen Challenge as property managers on the four-party agreement with Lansing Township's DDA.

Officials say this partnership could continue for years until the township decides what to do with the Lake Lansing Road residences.

For now, "they're going to be put to good use," Joe Droste, a township DDA board member, said. "It's a win-win for everybody."

Lansing Teen Challenge hasn't always been welcomed. When the local program tried to expand into the Lansing School District's former Holmes Street School in 2006, city residents protested.

The program headquarters and 57 current live-in students and staff members remain at 510 W. Willow St.

Meanwhile, the Garvies are reunited after a year of living apart. John had to graduate from Lansing Teen Challenge. His wife, who started on the road to recovery earlier, worked at another Teen Challenge facility in Northville.

Their 1306 Lake Lansing Road home is small, and they have only a few mattresses and other pieces of furniture.

But "it's good to be together. It looks like a palace to us," said John Garvie, who lost his towing business after he and his wife slipped under the spell of drugs and alcohol.

He saw his wife once a week while trying to stay sober and graduate from the Lansing Teen Challenge program.

Now, as the two help others through the program that seems to have saved them, they'd like to stay

in their new home "as long as they'll let us," Tammy Garvie said.

She is doing secretarial work for Lansing Teen Challenge. Her husband handles maintenance. While getting paid minimum wage, their new home in the program serves as their room and board.

Neighbors don't seem to mind the Garvies' past.

"Everybody has a right to do better," said Elena Rodriguez, a Massachusetts Avenue resident.

Bill Houghtaling, who has a leadership role with both Northtown Neighborhood Association and Paint A Place, is thankful he can call Lansing Teen Challenge when he needs help painting homes, repairing gates or doing other home improvements.

"They're ready to go to work," said Houghtaling, who has worked with the recovery program in the past.

Some Teen Challenge enrollees, all of whom are 18 or older, look forward to leaving their Lansing headquarters for clean-up projects.

"Giving back to the community is part of my healing process," said 49-year-old Tim Sutherland, who, like the Garvies, has struggled with drugs and alcohol.

Contact Susan Vela at 702-4248 or svela@lsj.com.

Teen pregnancy community forum to be held

By Mardi Suhs

CADILLAC NEWS

CADILLAC - Wayne County has the highest rate of teen pregnancy in the State of Michigan. Wexford County rates aren't far behind.

In fact, Wexford County ranks fifth highest for teen pregnancies out of Michigan's 83 counties.

A forum on teen pregnancy in Wexford County, sponsored by the Cadillac Area Health Coalition, will meet to discuss this " issue Wednesday.

The purpose of the " forum is to increase awareness of the impact of teen pregnancy on our community, to decide if this high rate of teen pregnancy is acceptable to citizens, and if agreed, establish ways to work together to reduce these statistics.

"We've known for a long time that our teen pregnancy rate is alarmingly high," stated Diane Dykstra of United Way. "We need everyone to be aware of the problem and how it affects costs in our " community."

Nationally, teen childbearing costs taxpayers \$181 million each year. Parenthood is a leading cause of high school drop out rate among teen girls, making it less likely for teen mothers to have the skills needed for a well-paying job. Eighty percent of teen mothers remain dependant on welfare for life.

"My hope for this forum," explained Dawn Ewald of Mercy Hospital "would be that the community can decide if they want to embrace this issue and suggest some ways to offset those statistics."

mardijo@chartermi.net | 775-NEWS (6397)

- WHAT: Community Forum on Teen Pregnancy
- WHEN: 3 to 5 p.m. Wednesday
- WHERE: Wexford County Conference Room, 401 N. Lake St., Cadillac
- QUESTIONS: Call Shari Spoelman at 779-9480

Purpose of forum

The purpose of the Teen Pregnancy Forum, sponsored by the Cadillac Area Health Coalition, is to:

- Increase community awareness of the scope of local teen pregnancy rates
- Educate the public about the impact, in terms of social, health, financial and " human costs, of teen " pregnancy.
- Decide if our teen pregnancy rate is acceptable
- Identify levels of commitment and willingness to work together on the issue



June 8, 2008

Teen offenders face peers in Teen Court

By *SUE LOUNDS*
Lansing Community Newspapers

ST. JOHNS — Teen Court. Is it a court for teen-age offenders? Is it a court made up of teens?

Actually, Clinton County Teen Court is both.

The new program is operated by Clinton County Probate Court, under the direction of Judge Lisa Sullivan. Its mission is "to rehabilitate youth offenders through peer justice and parental and community collaboration while teaching ownership and accountability for inappropriate actions."

The focus of Teen Court is restorative justice, according to Judge Sullivan.

"There's a difference between making a victim whole and trying to punish," said Sullivan.

Youth offenders who are eligible for adjudication in Teen Court must meet certain guidelines. They must be 16 or younger. At age 17, they are considered adults and must be handled in the adult court system. Their offenses must be non-violent. The teen must have had minimal past involvement with law enforcement. And, most importantly, the teen must admit guilt.

The teen juries do not determine guilt or innocence. Their purpose is to decide on an appropriate disposition or consequence for the teen offender.

"It has impacted all of the participants," said Judge Sullivan. "The respondents (teen offenders) are often shaking; they're scared."

Judge Sullivan says she has seen different levels of parental involvement, but parental involvement is a requirement of Teen Court.

The youth offender's "day in court" is exactly that. The youth appears in the Probate Court room. The offender and parent(s) sit at the defense table. A representative of the court system - and the victim if the victim is present - sits at the prosecution table.

The teen, serving as clerk, calls the court to order and instructs those in the courtroom to stand as the judge enters. The judge explains what is going to happen before going "on the record."

Judge Sullivan questions the jurors to be certain they can be unbiased in their deliberations. She then swears them in. She addresses the respondent (youth offender) and offers him an opportunity to make a statement. The parent(s) are also given a chance to speak.

The jurors are given an opportunity to ask questions of the teen and the parents.

Teen Court has met a few times in Clinton County. The first time, students from DeWitt High School served as the clerk, bailiff and jurors. Other times, students in the Clinton County RESA Criminal Justice program filled those positions.

"This is a tremendous opportunity for the students," said Chris Daniels, criminal justice instructor. "They take it very seriously."

After receiving instructions from the judge, the jury of teen peers is escorted to the jury room by the bailiff - also a teen. There, the jurors select a fore person and a recorder. Then they get down to the

business of determining the disposition. Unlike adult juries that must determine guilt or innocence unanimously, the teen jurors must come to a two-thirds majority.

Clinton County Teen Court is based on the principles of restorative justice. The process views crime as a violation of people, relationships and the community, not simply as an act against the State, according to the Teen Court information packet. The goal is to rebuild relationships, repair harm, resolve problems and build capacities when working with offenders and participants in the program. The ultimate intent is to hold the youth offenders accountable for their actions and restore what has been lost.

With that in mind, the teen jurors are asked to determine an appropriate sentence, one that fits the offense and helps to restore the damage caused, if possible.

In addition to the disposition imposed by the teen jurors, three orders are required of all teen offenders in Teen Court:

1. School attendance - all respondents must be in school, be on time to every class and make significant weekly progress as reported by his/her teachers.
2. Teen Court Probation - not less than 30 days but not more than four months. The teen offenders are subject to the rules and regulations of probation, including curfew. As a minimum requirement of probation, the teen must report to the juvenile probation officer with regular phone contact to report his or her progress.
3. Complete survey/evaluation - teens are required to complete certain forms.

The jurors are given a list of possible alternative sentence options including such things as writing a letter of apology, community service work, counseling assessment, no contact orders, restitution, substance abuse assessment, drug screens, tutoring programs, written essay, Greenhaven or jail tour or attend a session of victim impact panel. They jurors are encouraged to be creative, especially when trying to help the offenders learn a positive lesson regarding their offenses.

Teens who have served on the jury have found the experience to be worthwhile.

"It was a fun and interesting experience," said Anna Rahall of Bath High School.

"I would definitely come back and do it again," said William Yockey of DeWitt High School.

Reaching a decision that was agreeable to the majority of the panel wasn't easy.

"It was hard to decide on an appropriate punishment," said Emily Stinson of Ovid-Elsie High School. "We decided on a middle ground. Some thought it should be tougher, and some thought it should be easier."

June 6, 2008

WELFARE CASELOAD CONTINUES RECENT TRENDS

The number of cash assistance recipients continued to decline and the number of food assistance recipients continued to increase in April, according to a [report](#) from the Department of Human Services.

Family Independence Program cases continued a long-term decline, with 77,180 total cases in April, down from 78,471 in March. Total caseloads have been falling for about the past six months and regular cases have been falling for more than a year.

The FIP cases included 72,257 that provided full benefits, which was down from 73,381 the month prior. And the extended cases, which provide a minimal benefit to maintain eligibility for job training assistance, fell to 4,923 from 5,090 in March.

The Food Assistance Program set another high at 594,381 cases, up from 590,615 in March. The program has now set record highs for six consecutive months.

Childcare assistance notched up in April to 53,411 cases after falling in March (52,107 cases) and February (52,139 cases).

DHS Summarily Suspends the Group Child Care Home License of Felicia Lockhart

Contact: Maureen Sorbet (517) 373-7394

June 6, 2008

The Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS), Bureau of Children and Adult Licensing (BCAL), issued an order of summary suspension and notice of intent to revoke the license of a Oakland County group child care home provider, Felicia Lockhart, #DG630250869, 14600 Rosemary, Oak Park. This action resulted from a recent investigation of a complaint of the group child care home.

The June 5, 2008, complaint investigation found violations of the Child Care Organizations Act and administrative rules regarding appropriate care and supervision. BCAL took emergency action to protect the health, welfare, and safety of children.

Effective 6:00 p.m., June 5, 2008, the summary suspension order prohibits Felicia Lockhart from operating a group child care home at 14600 Rosemary, Oak Park, or at any other address or location. Accordingly, she may not accept children for care after that date and time. The order also requires Ms. Lockhart to inform all of the parents of children in her care that her license has been suspended and that she can no longer provide child care.

Ms. Lockhart has held a license to operate a group child care home since August 29, 2002. The license was for 12 children.

Michigan law defines a group child care home as "a private home in which more than six but not more than 12 minor children are given care and supervision for periods of less than 24 hours a day, unattended by a parent or legal guardian, except children related to an adult member of the family by blood, marriage, or adoption. Group child care home includes a home that gives care to an unrelated minor child for more than four weeks during a calendar year."

For more information, consult DHS Web site at www.michigan.gov/dhs